

IN THE CLAIMS

Claims 1-16 were previously cancelled. Claims 17, 19, 20, 22, 25-27 and 29 are currently amended. Claims 18, 21 and 24 are currently cancelled. Claims 23 and 28 are carried forward, all as follows.

Claims 1-16 (Cancelled)

17. (Currently Amended) A folding apparatus comprising:

a spur cylinder;

a folding jaw cylinder cooperating with said spur cylinder and defining a transfer gap in cooperation with said spur cylinder;

at least one spur strip on said spur cylinder and having a plurality of spur needles adapted to releasably hold a leading end of a first signature during passage of said at least one spur strip passing through said transfer gap;

at least one deflector on said spur cylinder and having a deflector strip usable to selectively to cover and to expose said spur needles on said at least one spur strip; and

means for moving said at least one deflector between a spur needle exposing

position wherein said at least one deflector strip is retracted in said spur cylinder to expose said spur needles and a spur needle covering position wherein said at least one deflector strip is extended~~extending~~ from said spur cylinder to cover said spur needles, said at least one deflector strip being movable from said spur needle exposing retracted position, during passage of said at least one spur strip through said transfer gap, to said spur needle covering extended position, covering said spur needles, in response to rotation of said spur cylinder and subsequent to passage of said at least one spur strip and said at least one deflector through said transfer gap.

18. (Cancelled)

19. (Currently Amended) The folding apparatus of claim 17 wherein said at least one deflector strip, in said spur needle covering extended position, is arranged between an end section of a released first signature and extended spur needles of a second spur strip, said second spur strip being located subsequent to said at least one spur strip on said spur cylinder in a direction of rotation of said spur cylinder.

20. (Currently Amended) The folding apparatus of claim 17 wherein said spur cylinder has an axis of rotation and said at least one deflector strip extends parallel to said spur cylinder axis of rotation.

21. (Cancelled)

22. (Currently Amended) The folding apparatus of claim 17 wherein said at least one deflector strip extends radially outwardly beyond said spur needles in said spur needle covering, extended position.

23. (Previously Presented) The folding apparatus of claim 17 further including a second spur strip adapted to releasably hold a leading end of a second signature and wherein said at least one deflector is positioned before, in a direction of rotation of said spur cylinder, said second spur strip.

24. (Cancelled)

25. (Currently Amended) The folding apparatus of claim 17 wherein said at least one spur strip and said at least one deflector strip are retracted after release of said leading end of said first signature after passage of said leading end of said first signature beyond~~through~~ said transfer gap.

26. (Currently Amended) The folding apparatus of claim 17 wherein said at least one deflector strip includes an inclined face, said inclined face of said at least one deflector strip extending radially from a shell face of said spur cylinder and circumferentially opposite to a direction of rotation of said spur cylinder.

27. (Currently Amended) The folding apparatus of claim 17 further including a straight line extending between axes of rotation of said spur cylinder and said folding jaw cylinder and wherein said deflector, in said spur needle covering, extended position, being~~is~~ arranged within an angular range of between 30° and 60° with respect to said straight line and after said transfer gap in a direction of rotation of said spur cylinder.

28. (Previously Presented) The folding apparatus of claim 27 wherein said angular range is between 30° and 45°.

29. (Currently Amended) The folding apparatus of claim 17 further including a spur cylinder shell surface, said spur needles being extendable and retractable with respect to said shell surface and wherein said at least one deflector strip is extendable and retractable with respect to said shell surface and said at least one spur strip, ~~said at least one deflector selectively covering and exposing said spur needles~~ in response to said rotation of said spur cylinder.